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JAMES GREENLEAF.

By ALLEN C. CLARK.

(Read before the Society November 4, 1901.)

The name the Gallic exile bore,
St. Malo! from thy ancient mart,
Became upon our Western shore
Greenleaf for *Feuilleverte*.

A name to hear in soft accord
Of leaves by light winds overrun,
Or read, upon the greening sward
Of May, in shade and sun.

That name my infant ear first heard
Breathed softly with a mother's kiss;
His mother's own, no tenderer word
My father spake than this.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

The Huguenot refugee in America sought the shrine of religious right. Edmund Greenleaf pitched his humble habitation, the year 1635, in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, where is Newburyport. This is the acorn of the noble tree, bole and branches, that has spread beneficent shade. Of the bole is Simon Greenleaf, the legal text-book author, whose "Rules of Evidence" is so useful to the lawyer; Benjamin Greenleaf, the mathematician, whose arithmetic is so familiar to the student; Stephen Greenleaf, the wit and post-prandial orator of a former generation; of the branches is William Cranch, the judge; Noah Webster, the lexicographer; John G. Whittier, the poet. The mention of a few components of the tree must not be taken to mean that many might not be mentioned. The Green-

leaf family is notable for its exponents of literature and learning.

The Council of Boston decided in what manner the declaration of the honorable Continental Congress should be made public. It ordered that the said declaration be proclaimed by the sheriff of the County of Suffolk from the balcony of the State house in Boston; and so it was, July 25, 1776. Perched upon the shoulders of two kindly gentlemen were two boys, John Quincy Adams and William Cranch, who were delighted to see and hear Mr. Greenleaf read that potential paper. And when William Greenleaf was not serving writs he stood behind his counter, for he was likewise a merchant.

William and Mary Greenleaf had fifteen children; James was the twelfth in numerical order.

James had a brother, Daniel, a physician, who has been preserved to posterity by a biographer, although the tenor of his even way was never disturbed by event. He was so attached to his home he never strayed beyond its sight but once and then upon an urgent solicitation to visit his sisters at New Bedford. Meeting on the road a man walking swiftly and laughing to himself, Mrs. Greenleaf inquired of the doctor: "What do you imagine that man is so much pleased about?" Answered he: "Why, my dear, he is without doubt on his way home."

Of the Greenleaf children the sex of charm and grace did predominate. These Priscillas were "beautiful and exemplary," and surely suitors several did overlook in turn to accept a better, for in their prescience the pick of the Puritan sons did they wed.

The creator of the Hudibrastic poem, *McFingal*, John Trumbull, anent Noah Webster's marriage to Rebecca Greenleaf, writes: "Webster has returned and brought

with him a very pretty wife. I wish him success; but I doubt in the present decay of business in our profession whether his profits will enable him to keep up the style he sets out with. I fear he will breakfast upon institutes, dine upon dissertations, and go to bed supperless."

James' sister, Margaret, married Thomas Dawes. He was a founder of government in constitutional convention, an interpreter of law on the bench, a wit and a writer in prose and poetry.

In James' sixteenth year his father relieved himself of the shrievalty, retired from business and removed to New Bedford. James may have assisted in the shop; he had the mercantile proclivity, inherited or acquired.

I first find James Greenleaf in his twenty-third year in Philadelphia. That year, 1788, he formed with James Watson a partnership in mercantile marine.

Watson & Greenleaf was the sign over the door of No. 7 Crane Wharf, New York. That designation is no more on the map, the place is between Beckman and Peck Slips, close to the tower of the Brooklyn bridge.

Mr. Greenleaf immediately made his residence in Holland. John Quincy Adams at the time in Holland, on mission, mentions in his diary Greenleaf's mansion in Amsterdam and his consequential connections. Mr. Greenleaf was appreciated by the Dutch aristocracy. With him to purpose was to pursue; his decisiveness was without exception; it marked his ventures matrimonial as commercial. In three months he met, courted and wed the Baroness Antonia Cornelia Elbertine Scholten van Aschat et Oud-Haarlem. The descendants of this union to this day over there in the dyked domain carry in the string of initials a G commemorative of their ancestor. A portraitist in water colors in minutest detail has transcribed the features of Mr. and

Baroness Greenleaf; and from a Yankee model has made a handsome Dutchman.

Mr. Greenleaf, for the house of Watson & Greenleaf, with the bankers, Daniel Crommelin & Sons, at Amsterdam, negotiated a series of loans under twelve contracts first and last dated January 31, 1789, and August 1, 1792, for an aggregate of \$1,300,000 on pledge of American securities, namely: \$1,808,000 United States stock, 400 shares equal to \$160,000 of the Bank of the United States stock and other valuable interest-bearing specialties.

Mr. Greenleaf, as a citizen of Massachusetts, was March 2, 1793, appointed United States Consul at Amsterdam.

Mr. Greenleaf came to this country in 1793 on an intended visit. I have no authority for my asserted belief he was attracted hitherward by the allurements of prospectus of the Capital City said to have been circulated throughout the civilized world. The corner stone of the Capitol was laid September 18, 1793, in the presence of the President and a concourse of which was Mr. Greenleaf. A week after he, the *first capitalist*, consummated contracts of purchase with city commissioners and with original proprietors.

Turkey Buzzard Point it was; Greenleaf Point it is now. The change came with Greenleaf himself.* The new name more becomes this scene where wed the waters of the Potomac and the Anacostia. It is a September day and nature is in autumn gayety. Greenleaf first treads this spot which is to keep his name with the flight of time. From this vantage-ground to him a picturesque

* In the *Washington Gazette*, 1796-8, it is invariably Greenleaf Point; in the *Intelligencer*, 1800 and after, Greenleaf's Point. The English visitor, Isaac Weld, junior, 1795, writes it Green Leaf's Point. The stream adjoining, James Creek, was originally, 1759, called St. James Creek.

panorama presents. Greenleaf enjoys the view and decides this wedge between the rivers shall rival the beauty and utility of the battery of the Empire City where now he sojourns. And he further decides when he shall be in possession of the vast fortune he is to realize from the sale of the three thousand lots, the contract for which the clerk up at the commissioners' is now engrossing he will build on this spot and this sward shall be his lawn, these trees his shade and this supreme view his own. When he relinquishes his holdings a few years subsequent he reserves this dedicated spot, "except square 506, square next south of 506 and square south of the square last mentioned," three squares on the bank of the Potomac beginning one square south of the present arsenal wall. In severer stress he sells the two squares northward to his friend William Deakins, junior; and in severest stress, the remaining square to his wealthy brother-in-law, John Appleton, a Salem merchant, in hope of eventual recovery.

St. James' Creek, so styled in 1759, was abbreviated to James, so creek and point make completely James Greenleaf.

The first contract of purchase with the commissioners is dated September 23, 1793.

President Washington to Mr. Lear writes:

"MOUNT VERNON, September 25, 1793.

"My Dear Sir:

"You will learn from Mr. Greenleaf that he has dipped deeply in the concerns of the Federal city,—I think he has done so on very advantageous terms for himself, and I am pleased with it notwithstanding on public ground; as it may give facility to the operations at that place, at the same time that it is embarking him and his friends in a measure which, although it could not well fail under any circumstances that are likely to happen, may be considerably promoted by men

of spirit with large capitals. He can, so much better than I, detail his engagements and the situation of things in and about the city, that I shall not attempt to do it at this time."

The name of James Greenleaf is rarely mentioned with historical significance without the appellation, the schemer. I too adopt it, yet not in a reproachful sense. He was fertile in financial manœuvre and manipulation.

In the purchase of Washington lots it was Greenleaf's plan to pledge them with Holland capitalists for funds to fulfill his obligations with the commissioners and the proprietors, and to guarantee the interest on the loans by deposit of the American securities belonging to and already hypothecated by the firm of Watson & Greenleaf. Mr. Watson declined a share in the venture and thereupon a dissolution and division ensued; Mr. Greenleaf with other assets was assigned the entire equity in the securities mentioned.

Robert Morris, the financier of the American Revolution, had acquired vast territory in the State of New York and disposed of parts to Dutch investors with princely profit. This fatal good fortune prompted Morris to recklessly invest in wild lands, anywhere and everywhere, in areas measured by acres, tens of thousands. John Nicholson, also of Philadelphia, Comptroller General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, had the speculative fever even at a greater height. He had grants to one-seventh of the surface of that Commonwealth.

Mr. Greenleaf in Holland was advised of Mr. Morris's success and he was eager to join with him whose enterprises were so fortunate. The next month, October, Mr. Morris and Mr. Nicholson each took a third interest in Mr. Greenleaf's Washington purchase and he became associated with them in lands as nature left them.

The contract of September 23, for the purchase of 3,000 lots, was merged in the contract of December 24, 1793, for the purchase of 6,000 lots by Morris and Greenleaf. The latter contract provides that the price is eighty dollars a lot, payable one-seventh, May 1, 1794, and the remainder in six equal annual installments, without interest with a building condition to erect annually twenty brick dwellings two stories high of 1,200 feet area to be discounted a fourth for three-story structures and not to sell before January 1, 1796, without a stipulation that on every third lot a like house should be built within four years from date of sale.

The contract conferred on Morris and Greenleaf authority to take an associate in the whole purchase without creating on him an obligation to build on every third lot. Between the three, Morris, Greenleaf and Nicholson, it was a joint purchase. Nicholson was reserved as surety for such engagements as the two disclosed principals might make.

The confidence of the commissioners in the triune speculators was too great for suspicion of failure. Without as much as a dollar to the exchequer the commissioners upon the suggestion of Greenleaf with remarkable liberality agreed, April 24, 1794, to grant the lots on Notley Young's land, estimated at a thousand, upon the security of Morris, Greenleaf and Nicholson for the amount of consideration and the performance of the building contract and upon the same bond, a credit of one thousand lots granting as requested.

The contracts to the commissioners promised cessation of disappointment and the completion of the public buildings and besides the development of the city. In the first contract Greenleaf engaged to furnish one thousand pounds current money of Maryland monthly

to commence May 1, 1794, and to continue until the public buildings should be completed, limiting the time to January 1, 1800.

Greenleaf's loan scheme in Holland was managed by Sylvanus Bourne, the Vice Consul at Amsterdam. He contracted with the banking house of Daniel Crommelin & Sons to float a popular subscription. It was sanctioned by the Dutch government by an Act, May 6, 1794, which designated Pieter Godfrey, Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck and Robert Daniel Crommelin, guardians for the public of the property pledged. A writing July 9, between the commissioners and Greenleaf, recites that the commissioners are let into a third part of it. The same month, the 28th, Greenleaf made a conveyance to the guardians, as a mortgage, to secure a loan of two million guilders, or eight hundred thousand Spanish milled dollars. The subscription was a partial success; from unforeseen circumstances no more than two hundred thousand guilders had been subscribed and in consequence of the failure the guardians relinquished proportionate security.

The resourceful Vice Consul then tried the faith of Rotterdam. He had the service of the firm Rocquette, Elserier and Beeldemaker. The returns, July 29, 1795, showed only one hundred and twenty thousand guilders subscribed. The loan was fixed at one hundred and fifty thousand; and the Vice Consul for Greenleaf subscribed for the deficit. Greenleaf conveyed to the guardians, Gilles Groenveld, Rudolf Mees and Pieter van der Wallen van Vollenhoven, lots to secure the principal and stock to protect the interest.

The aggregate of the Amsterdam and Rotterdam loans is one hundred and forty thousand dollars, including twelve taken by Greenleaf. The commissioners did not share and Greenleaf revested them with the city's

contribution to the security. The lots reposed in the guardians for security of the principal were the property of the syndicate, the stock for guaranty of interest the property of Greenleaf, individually. Before the loan project was assured, the syndicate pursued a financing scheme of kiting its bills in Holland on short periods of payment. The bills summed enormously. The mere fact that the Amsterdam subscription had been undertaken by reputable bankers seemed sufficient warrant by the syndicate to draw drafts on the Vice Consul as if consummated. Had the scheming syndicate always succeeded, the Dutch would have been without money.

Greenleaf's negotiations of purchase in the Federal City on his own behalf and for the triumvirate were of meteoric swiftness; within nine months the contracts, every one of them, were signed and sealed. Approximately correct is the computation. The public lots numbered 10,136, and of course, the proprietors, the same. The triumvirate owned 7,234 lots; Greenleaf, individually, 1,341. Of the public lots, Greenleaf was concerned in 6,000, of proprietors' 2,575 or expressed in percentage 60 per cent. of the public, 25 per cent. of the proprietors' and 42 per cent. of all. Figuring the proprietors' lots at the same rate stipulated for the public makes the consideration \$686,000; the building obligation twenty houses annually for seven years, estimating each house at three thousand is \$420,000; Greenleaf's engagement to loan the commissioners for public buildings is \$181,333, in all involved, \$1,287,333.

Mr. Greenleaf resided in New York. He gave personal supervision to the syndicate's affairs in the Federal City, of which he had absolute control, to the extent his ramified affairs would permit. He conferred his trusts upon relatives. He first stationed his brother-in-

law, Dr. Nathaniel Walker Appleton, at Washington. From illness in September, 1794, he retired and returned to Boston. Mr. Greenleaf then turned to another brother-in-law, William Cranch. In October, 1794, Mr. Cranch began his remarkable career at the Capital City.

These Greenleaf mansions are the true colonial; each "proudly bears its credentials on its weather-beaten face." Who the architect? Greenleaf. Greenleaf collaborated with the draftsman, one directed, the other drew. In these Greenleaf mansions is the same fashion and, too, diversity. Even in the roofs, some have gentle slope, while their neighbors have sharp cant and long sweep. All those at the Point that bear the name of Greenleaf were commenced by him, although the persistent components of the triad continued some.

Ten years since the Greenleaf houses on the Point were nearly all standing. Not that any were unable to stand longer; in instances blasting only shook their steadiness. Modern requirement called for removal. On the Point are several rows of small houses recently built. I suspect a shrewd schemer now and then buys a Greenleaf mansion and strews it into a row.

The Greenleaf houses were begun in 1794. Some were completed the next year. The mansions are distinguishable, although a few are masquerading in modern fronts, which ill become them. The row on Fourth Street is the *first* and *oldest* in the city. It is named Wheat Row, after John Wheat, who owned and occupied, in the early times, the north house. The mansion 468 N Street was the home of Judge Cranch and 470 N, of Captain William Mayne Duncanson and of Mr. Samuel Eliot, junior. The Law mansion, Sixth and N Streets, is ruining with that rapidity to rack the soul of the antiquarian. In the house of the four on O Street, next

to the river, lived Commodore John Rodgers, who made so many notable cruises and brilliant naval exploits. When he laid aside the spy-glass for all time, 1838, Minerva, his widow, continued to reside there.

Greenleaf began the construction of the historic Six Buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue. Reasonably solicitous to ascertain the credit he would receive on the building obligation he, through Mr. Cranch, March 3, 1795, communicated with the commissioners. This letter was a repetition of one the month previous which had received no reply. The commissioners were never chargeable with too much hurriedness. The very next day, March 4, President Washington in his private capacity writes to Tobias Lear to gather the consensus of opinion, casually, on the merits of the quarrel between Greenleaf and the commissioners and assures him of inviolate secrecy.

Mr. Greenleaf effected the two large sales, those to Thomas Law and William Mayne Duncanson. The syndicate paid \$80 a lot and sold to Law for \$297.50. This excited the ire of President Washington; to Daniel Carroll, the commissioner, he comments on the Greenleaf contracts censoriously:

“The persons to whom you have sold are reselling to others and this they are doing to an immense profit. Lately a gentleman from England has paid, or is to pay, £50,000 for 500 lots. Will it not be asked, why are speculators to pocket so much money? Are not the commissioners as competent to make bargains?”

Now the celerity by electric device is such that to project is almost to perform. At Greenleaf's time no practical advance had been made, yet the present facilities can be imagined to have existed so steadily did he operate and rapidly consummate his varied and vast ventures. Mr. Law “was inferior to no man in emi-

nence or in power, the third or fourth in degree in a great empire," yet he held Mr. Greenleaf in awe because of his activity in business and in admiration because of his attainment in scholarship. Mr. Greenleaf's land purchases extended from New York to Georgia; two million seven hundred thousand acres in the gulf state, and besides he contributed his third proportion of the four million acres to the North American Land Company organized February 20, 1795, and composed of Morris, Nicholson and Greenleaf.

Two purchases made in the spring of 1795 indicated Mr. Greenleaf's intention to remove from New York to Philadelphia. He purchased, on Chestnut between Sixth and Seventh, a broad frontage, extending far back to Carpenter Street, a mansion with gardens and water courses. It was cater-cornered from Robert Morris's pile in brick and marble and cater-cornered contrariwise to Independence Hall.

Where Schuylkill winds his way through banks of flowers, John Penn, a proprietary of Pennsylvania and the last provincial governor, built a country seat and called it Lansdowne. Traditon places the mansion on the plateau exactly where now stands Horticultural Hall, the Centennial construction. These were to be the city and country homes of Mr. Greenleaf and that he expected to share their occupation and with whom is apparent.

On Rock Creek, where G and Twenty-seventh Streets intersect, was a wharf and a stone structure, store and warehouse. This was the business place of Lear & Company, merchants. The firm's constituents were Tobias Lear, Tristram Dalton and James Greenleaf; it was constituted prior to October, 1794. It was, or proposed to be, the supply base of the southern section. An arrangement of liquidation and protection "from

personal arrest and vexation'' specifies creditor-merchants of London, Wakefield, Manchester, Glasgow and Amsterdam and three whose credits each exceed thirteen thousand dollars.

In a stone building, two stories high, close by the commissioners' wharf, in square 129, now a part of the Potomac flats reclaimed, was the brewery and distillery of Coningham & Company. Cornelius Coningham's partner was James Greenleaf.

Greenleaf with Morris and Nicholson entered into articles of agreement for the sale to them of his Washington holdings, July 10, 1795, and pursuant, a conveyance was executed, May 13, 1796. Fifteen days later Greenleaf sold to the two co-promoters his share in the North American Land Company for \$1,150,000. The consideration in both transactions was in the drafts of purchasers, one-half drawn by Morris and accepted by Nicholson, the other counter-drawn and accepted.

Mr. Law several times petitions the Commissioners for certain concessions to enable him improve New Jersey Avenue. The Commissioners neglect acknowledgments. Mr. Law beseeches Mr. Morris's interposition, who signifies a dislike to enter into dispute. Then Mr. Law forwards copies of his petitions to Mr. Greenleaf and inquires, "Have I been wanting in respect or attentions—my style is not harsh, my request not immoderate." Mr. Greenleaf takes up the gauntlet for Mr. Law and wages an aggressive battle. Hon. Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, transmits Mr. Greenleaf's letter of charges with the result the Commissioners immediately let Mr. Law have his way, and the Secretary of State their pretext for delay, and Mr. Greenleaf a letter in which is said:

"You have made to the Secretary of State charges against us of direct fraud and partiality in the execution of our office

to cover, we believe, your inability to comply with your engagements with the public. We call upon you to substantiate these charges, or to be considered as a false and infamous accuser."

Mr. Greenleaf's reply in part is:

"You call on me to substantiate charges made to the Secretary of State against you of *direct fraud* in the execution of your office. I have never made such charges. In my letter I have said that I do firmly believe that you have been governed by your personal interest to the detriment of the part of the city I wished the most to promote; and that one of my motives for disposing of my property in the Federal City arose from the conviction in my own mind that you would oppose every obstacle to my operations while tending to the benefit of that part of the city. I see here no charge of *fraud*. I do still and ever shall believe what I advanced to the Secretary of State, and unfortunately for the federal establishment I am not alone in this belief.

"You intimate in your letter that my charge of fraud on your part arises from a wish on mine to cover my inability to comply with my engagements with the public. This appears to me to be a very strange mode of reasoning, and I declare to you is totally unfounded; but had you aided me as I conceive I had a right to expect from you, and as your worthy predecessors thought with me, you should have found at least that I could have done more than I did do; be this as it may I am not ashamed of the operations of which I have been the principal promoter and you as the servants of the public ought to have viewed them with peculiar satisfaction, when you found that those operations gave a use of eighteen fold in some instances to the value of the property entrusted to you. I will further add that those operations have called for expenditures on my part and the gentlemen concerned with me of upwards of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the past year, a sum fourfold what was ever contemplated by your predecessors as necessary to the fulfillment of my contract; and that at least three times that sum has actually

flown to the federal establishment through my immediate means and those concerned with me. If therefore the strict letter of agreement has in some instances been deviated from, the spirit of the agreement has been attended to, and I know too well the intention of the President to believe he placed you where you are to cavil at trifles.

"I repeat to you, sirs, that I have no desire or time to enter the lists with you and prove that you have acted fraudulently; further that it is unfortunate both for yourselves and the public that you are placed in a sphere in which you neither render it service or do yourselves honor."

The Commissioners discerned that Greenleaf's attic story was more than so-so furnished. They realized also that when one goes out to fight and the foe is more formidable than expected, he can afford to be generous and let the foe have the field.

Between Morris and Nicholson was ardent attachment, between Nicholson and Greenleaf deep enmity, between Morris and Greenleaf a relation, suspicious and strained, Morris and Greenleaf were of that receptiveness to argument that adjustment could be upon lines of equity and reciprocity. Nicholson had propensity to print. Of all modes of quarrel, newspaper wrangle was to the pacific Morris the most abhorrent. A newspaper duel was imminent. Morris tried to avert it. Morris and Greenleaf planned an arrangement upon principles of justice and mutuality. Nicholson pursued the pen-and-print practice; inserted a caution in the *Washington Gazette*; Morris alined with Nicholson; and the war was on.

Greenleaf's philippic reaches the topmost heights of rhetorical invective; it is comparable to Sallust's denunciation of Catiline in the ancient times and to Burke's of Hastings in the modern. His reference to confusion of funds, state and federal, by the Comptroller-General and the Financier of the American Revolu-

tion touched vulnerable points. Ever after Morris attributed his downfall to Greenleaf but his own letters and his own biographer refute the attribution.

William B. Wood in "Personal Recollections of the Stage" alludes to Morris's practice of fifty journeys daily around the court of the Bastile and his mode of count dropping a pebble at each round; then adds:

"While I offer this little picture of morning *walking* party, on one side the prison, I must not forget a *riding* party on the other, nearest to Fifth Street, in this department, which I was occasionally permitted to overlook. Mr. James Greenleaf with Mr. Nicholson, for many years Controller of the Finances of Pennsylvania, who had been the partner of Mr. Morris's enterprises, and with them of his misfortunes, had the privilege of forming a small circle, and indulging himself with a rapid ride, on a fine horse, each morning at the period alluded to. It was quite amusing to observe with what skill habit had enabled him to make these swift evolutions within so limited a space."

The actor-author accounts Mr. Greenleaf's equestrian exercise. It was more than conjecture, his mental exercise was the equal consideration of two plans, one to get out, the other to get Morris and Nicholson in jail. Both plans succeeded. Greenleaf's deprivation of liberty in the confines of prison walls was of short duration—perhaps a year. He was liberated August 30, 1798.

Mr. Morris at his county seat "The Hills" was self-immuned and so was Mr. Nicholson at his residence, Seventh and Race, Philadelphia, to escape the attentions of creditors and constables whom Mr. Morris styled respectively the cormorants and the myrmidons. Mr. Morris called his stronghold "Castle Defiance," Mr. Nicholson his "Castle Defence." Mr. Nicholson to his partner in distress wrote daily letters numbered one to six and sometimes one to eleven, Mr. Morris on

one occasion writes "I wish to God these notes would take up those which bear promises of payment," and on another these prophetic words: "But if the key is once turned on you by the hand under any authority but your own God only knows when that door shall be opened to you; perhaps never until you shall be insensible to the affairs of the world." Nicholson was released from the debtor's apartment by death. In jail he turned his faculty to supply the necessities of himself, his wife and his eight infants by editing a paper at the top of which was a truth and a jest—"The Supporter or Daily Repast."

Modern progression has ameliorated the penalty of financial misfortune. The subjection to durance of Morris, Nicholson and Greenleaf, whose debts arose from too firm faith in the great growth of the new-born republic, illustrated the law's harshness and directed to repeal, more especially the loss of liberty to Morris to whom the nation was indebted for its liberty.

The enthusiastic Greenleaf, foreseeing the overgrowth of the city, the requirement for suburban subdivision and appropriations for street extensions, straightway buys on the meanders of the Eastern Branch two thousand acres. He had only been interested in the city two months and could count off on the digits of his hands the new houses when he vehemently protested to President Washington, and convinced him too, that there should be no hospital within its limits.

The exuberant Morris from the spot writes:

"The city has taken root and will progress tolerably fast the next two or three years, but in the year 1800 and afterwards it will increase beyond all example. The people will rush into it from all parts of America and Europe."

That charming chronicler, Oliver Wolcott, informs his wife:

“There appears to be a confident expectation that this place will soon exceed any in the world. Mr. Thornton, one of the commissioners, spoke of a population of 160,000 people, as a matter of course, in a few years. No stranger can be here a day and converse with the proprietors, without conceiving himself in the company of crazy people. Their ignorance of the rest of the world, and their delusions with respect to their own prospects, are without parallel.”

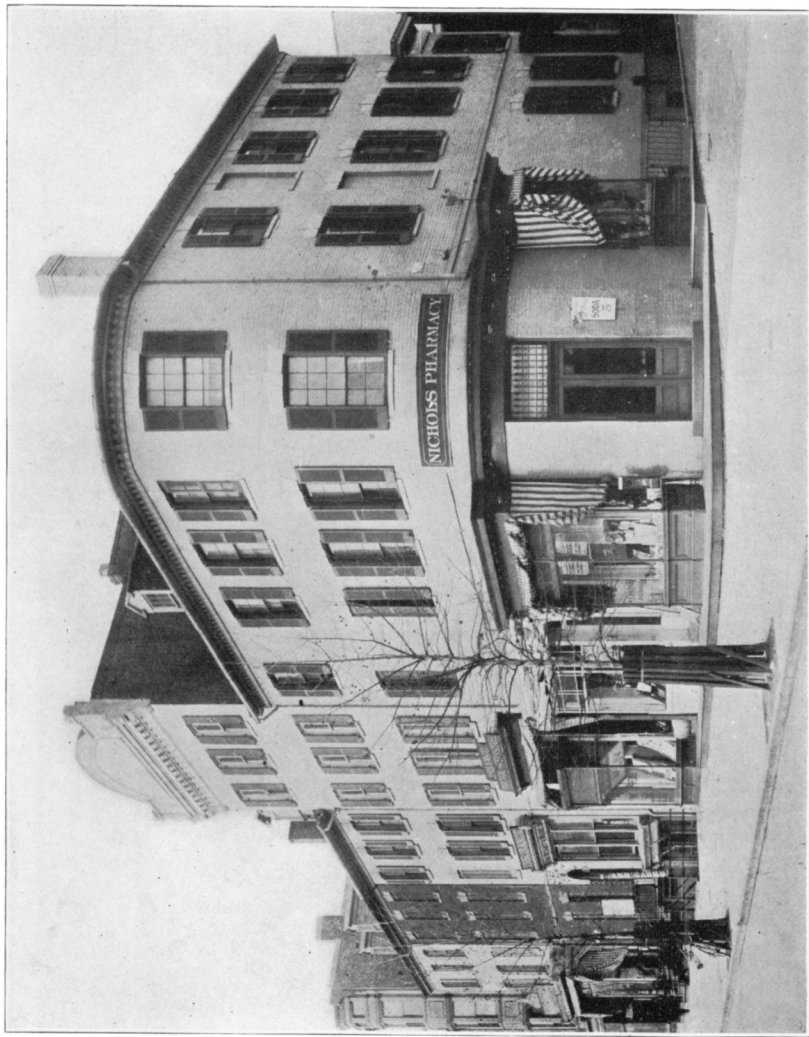
Greenleaf once held obligations of Morris and Nicholson amounting to two million dollars; the passing of a part with his endorsement to offset his own and the failure of the makers to honor that part, caused Greenleaf's undoing. Greenleaf assigned negotiable engagements in great sums and lands in vast value to Pratt and other Philadelphia merchants and forced Morris and Nicholson to assign to the same trustees their holdings in the city of Washington to protect their obligations to him. The Morris and Nicholson assignment is known as the *aggregate fund*. Greenleaf availed himself of bankruptcy relief under the statutes of Pennsylvania, Maryland and the United States. The trustees under the bankruptcy proceedings and those under the assignments conferred upon Greenleaf the amplest authority, so that he managed as if his own, the residue of his long life, the mighty remnant of all in which he had ever been concerned.

The crier observed the friendly features and stalwart form of Mr. Greenleaf and cried, *oyez, oyez, all persons having business before the honorable court will draw nigh and give attention, court is now in session; on the morrow whether the sun shone in all its effulgence or whether its joyous beams were obscured by cloud, or whether the rain poured, or whether the hail pelted, or whether the snow impeded, weather fair or weather foul, the crier observed Mr. Greenleaf, and*

cried *oyez, oyez*; on the morrow the crier noted Mr. Greenleaf was not missing and cried his perfunctory proclamation, and so on the successive morrows, week upon week, month upon month, year upon year, decade upon decade. It is not said that his honor did not stiffly incline his head towards the litigant, take his seat and direct the call of the calendar. Courtesy was due to the litigant, not that his sister Nancy was the wife of the chief judge, but that he supplied largely the grist which kept the judicial mill grinding. This, the tradition, I more than suspect, exaggerates the fact, yet is not an extravagant exaggeration.

It does not appear that Mr. Greenleaf took a course of law, or called himself a lawyer, or engaged in any cause save his own; yet it does appear he was well versed and mentally equipped for practice. For forty years he appeared in law court and in chancery with suits for ejectment and bills for injunction; for he was the aggressor and took the initiative. Reversing the adage he had no fool for a client and that he ably assisted himself is attested by the fact that in all of his six cases appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States to which he was a party, plaintiff or defendant, he was successful; and in the seven cases of the *aggregate fund* he was also successful, although in some not to the entire contention. The *first* cause, Chancery Docket 1, No. 1, filed March 24. 1801, Pratt and others against Duncanson and Ward, is a Greenleaf case. The first session of the original court was held the day previous.

A literary sketcher discusses Greenleaf's litigious career and drifts into a comparison with "Jarndyce and Jarndyce." The famous fiction may have its prototype in that familiar to us. It is not for me to deny that the novelist's creation is not suggested, somehow or somewhat, by Greenleaf's continuous court con-



"SEVEN BUILDINGS," NORTHWEST CORNER OF NINETEENTH STREET AND PENNA. AVE. N. W.

[From a photograph in the possession of the Society]

tention. In Greenleaf's last year, when Dickens, 1842, found here the "Barmecide Feast," he might too have found the skeleton of his story, for he must have heard of our celebrities, the things remarkable of them, then, of course, of Greenleaf and of Greenleaf's litigation. A decade after appears, 1853, "Bleak House," built by a romantic turn and twist of the perennial procrastination of the court of the Lord High Chancellor, the High Court of Chancery; and the author opens it by putting the heroine in training; where? "Greenleaf," "Greenleaf."

Mr. Greenleaf's appearance in the advertising columns of the *Intelligencer* is so frequent as to be almost continuous. The *Intelligencer* was the vehicle of his cautions. Mr. Greenleaf claimed all that he could by any pretext claim. He watched every move antagonistic and attempted to thwart it by a caution. His defence was unique; his weapon effective. These cautions stirred bitter controversies; the most celebrated is that with Benjamin Stoddert, the first Secretary of the Navy. The Stoddert caution Mr. Greenleaf thus supplements:

"I lament extremely that it is at the hazard of exciting much enmity and ill-will, that I shall occasionally be obliged to awaken long dormant, but important and just, claims on the part of the assignees of the joint and separate estates of Robert Morris, John Nicholson and James Greenleaf."

In the ancient mansion the skill of the architect is set off by the stain of time "which nature's hand alone pours forth." As the scars of the veteran revive the scenes of strife so to the antiquary and to the historian the marks of age on brick and stone remind of past association more impressing than at time of activity. The Seven Buildings* are rich in historic incident. Because

* Seven Buildings are in fact six. An additional building, not a part of the range, or some other circumstance gives the designation.

of Britain's invading vandals the mansion at the corner became the Executive Mansion. Here at the corner where shelves are lined with drugs for physical disorders were concocted the remedies to heal the political disruption of England and the American States. Overhead in the drawing room the charming Dolly, whose social glory time does not dim, with the courtly Madison received in state. At an earlier time the same building was the Department of State when the premiers, Marshall and Madison, as pilots safely steered the frail bark by international dangers. General Walter Stewart and Major Thomas L. Moore under an undertaking with Mr. Greenleaf commenced the construction, Morris and Nicholson continued, William Deakins and Uriah Forrest completed. Mr. Greenleaf charges "the possession has been *juggled* from the rightful owners" and in a caution with the invariable preface that such matters are "not proper for communication through the channel of a newspaper" proceeds to fill the column and to prove, in one hand at least, the pen is more cutting than the sword.

For aye divorce separated Mr. Greenleaf and Baroness Greenleaf. Desertion the decree declared doubtlessly. Mr. Greenleaf did surely intend to rejoin his wife and infants in Holland. Multiplicity of affairs and emergency of finances thwarted the voyage at each attempt. New environment evolved, "Out of sight out of mind."

An aristocratic beauty tempted to the treason of inconstancy and he to himself confessed,

The remembrance of my former love,
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.

The Allen is a notable Pennsylvania family. William Allen was chief justice of the province. Of the patrimonial estate his son James had his proportion in part

the site of Allentown. James's three daughters were renowned for beauty, grace and accomplishment. Margaret married William Tilghman, subsequently chief justice of Pennsylvania; Mary married Henry Walter Livingston, of Livingston Manor, New York; and Anne Penn, familiarly Nancy, married James Greenleaf, April 26, 1800. The ante-nuptial contract was not a bestowal upon the bride, but a protection from the groom's creditors.

Thackeray was enraptured with Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Mrs. Greenleaf. "She was one of the most splendid beauties this country has produced, so that Stuart was put to his mettle, in painting her portrait, to do her and himself justice." The same master's portrait of Mr. Greenleaf exhibits an exceedingly handsome man.

Mr. and Mrs. Greenleaf had two daughters named for their aunts, Mary L. and Margaret T.

Until 1826 Mr. and Mrs. Greenleaf divided their time between Philadelphia and Allentown except that Mr. Greenleaf made frequent visits to Washington. Mr. Greenleaf was the promoter of Allentown and he gave its thoroughfares the names of his associates: Law, Morris, Pratt, etc. The year named the Greenleafs came to Washington, first living in the residence near Thomas Circle, last occupied by Hon. William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury.

About 1831 Mr. Greenleaf built a wooden residence at the intersection of First and C Streets, and enclosed lots 17 and 18 in square 725. Here he resided the residue of his days. In his home he was surrounded plenteously with such things as a retired gentleman of taste and means would likely be; he had paintings and other pictorial art and a superb library. Mr. Greenleaf in this considerable enclosure had a stable which sheltered two horses, a grey and a red, and an equal number

of cows, concerning the shade of which history is silent. He grew in the garden I know not what besides the mulberry, the cultivation of which at that time was a horticultural fad. He had a farm on "The Island"; it comprised several squares. Here he pursued Adam's profession.

Mr. Greenleaf during the last years lived alone, a "self-sequester'd man." Mrs. Greenleaf was not in sympathy with the democratic days; her spirit was with the period of provincial pride. She dwelt in the mansion at Allentown. No one says the separation was from estrangement. The correspondence continued however its sentiments may have been in specie.

Mr. Greenleaf's expression was benign, manner dignified and conversation courteous. To him in high degree or humble degree, in his majority or in his minority, white or black, it was: "If you please" or other polite phrase. His abundant civility had no tint of affectation, but appeared the natural flow of a sweet nature. His conversation was not mere talk; it was the copious treasure of the mind gathered by association with the foremost in the various ways of life, by observation in travel at home and abroad, and by assimilation of the best literature in the languages of all advanced peoples. And he possessed that facility of polished converse, to

Speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence.

It is not to be inferred because Mr. Greenleaf was civil to the humblest that he mixed. His associations had been with the eminently respectable and he maintained the same social degree. He was cultured and he courted the company of the cultured and none other.

Daily Mr. Greenleaf exchanged greetings and confidences with his beloved sister Nancy and the dear judge, who were just around the corner. He almost lived with

his sister and his brother by marriage. Mrs. Cranch had been seriously ill; Mr. Greenleaf moderately ill. Perhaps in him it was the sympathy of soul; who can say nay? Mr. Greenleaf called his youthful assistant and laying gently his hand upon his shoulder said: "Bushrod, go to the judge's and see how sister is." The lad went to the back door. The judge himself appeared and answered: "Tell James, she is dead." The messenger returned. Mr. Greenleaf drew closer the garments and sank upon the couch. The shock was too severe; the vital current ceased to surge. The beloved sister had passed to the other shore, the brother waited only a few hours for the ferryman and he, too, passed over.

In the Congressional Cemetery is a monument whereon is chiseled this inscription:

JAMES GREENLEAF.
Born in Boston,
June 9, 1765;
Died in Washington,
September 17, 1843.
Æ 78.

The grave

Shuts up the story of our days.

Not so with Greenleaf. The story of his life shall live as the city stands.

It is almost a certainty that James Greenleaf first entered the Federal City a day previous to the ceremonies at the Capitol.

September 17, 1793, Greenleaf came; September 17, 1843, Greenleaf departed; an even fifty years.

September 18, 1793, the corner stone was laid; September 18, 1843, is its half-centenary.

At the time of death Mr. Greenleaf had large holdings

of unproductive realty. His personality more than paid his debts. His library was remarkable for size and value. The French, Dutch, Italian and Latin books, many old and rare, numbered 1,252. The total number of volumes was 2,612.

In company with the solid blocks of residences constructed by James Greenleaf, in architectural style of the Georgian period, and cultured as far as brick can be, is the Greenleaf Building. From its location on the Point the public school might be called Greenleaf, yet the real reason is a more worthy fitness.

He was a scholar and a ripe and a good one.

Wealth he had and better, learning; learning he had and better, culture; culture he had and better, character. Judge Wylie began his practice when Greenleaf was more vividly in the mind; and the judge told me: "Greenleaf was a great lawyer and a noble character."

This from *Washington in Embryo* is a sample criticism: "Among the experiments of some magnitude in 1793, the contract of the commissioners with Robert Morris, James Greenleaf and John Nicholson may be noticed * * * but the said parties utterly failed to comply with any part of the contracts, and the commissioners found themselves very seriously embarrassed by their failure."

The sales made by the several boards of commissioners are:

1. Johnson, Carrol and Stuart.....	6,227 lots	\$541,384
2. Scott, Carroll and Thornton.....	83 "	50,217
3. Scott, Thornton and White.....	101 "	41,081
	6,411	\$632,682
By Greenleaf.....	6,000 "	\$480,000
By all others.....	411 "	152,682

The Morris-Greenleaf contract-consideration is....	\$480,000
Less credit of one thousand lots on the personal responsibility of Morris, Greenleaf and Nicholson —Agreement, April 24, 1794.....	80,000
	\$400,000
Due January 1, 1801.....	115,241
Previously paid.....	284,759

From what other source, or combination of sources, besides state and national, were realized sources equal to this for public buildings?

This is the résumé! Until Greenleaf appeared the commissioners' sales were slight; he purchased six thousand lots and concerned two capitalists in the enterprise; he undertook to procure for the commissioners a loan in Holland; they expected from the sale and loan ample funds; from the sale they did receive two hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars; he had successfully financed in Holland and would have consummated the loan had not war precluded; he made personally the only large sales—to Law and Duncanson; he and his assigns, especially Law, erected nearly all the residences in readiness for the removal of the Government from Philadelphia to Washington. But for Greenleaf, individually and instrumentally, in probability, would the transfer of the governmental seat have been made?

Justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street.

Let those who write of the pioneers and promoters of the primitive period deal justly and speak truly. Let them fairly measure the achievement of James Greenleaf and at least ascribe him—prince; as for me, I shall ascribe him—king.